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Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Since the establishment of the Latin American Economic System (SELA) in October 1975, considerable cooperation has taken place between United Nations organizations, agencies and programmes and SELA. Such cooperation has evolved over the years and has become more diversified in terms of both the areas of cooperation and the organizations concerned. During the reporting period, nine organizations maintained various levels of cooperation with SELA, including information exchanges, reciprocal attendance at meetings, financial contributions to activities carried out by SELA and joint execution of activities.

The evolution of ongoing activities, together with the implementation of new mandates and/or new regional strategies by several organizations, appears to indicate that the level of cooperation with SELA could be maintained or increased in the coming years.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report was prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 56/98 of 14 December 2001 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System (SELA).

2. For the preparation of the present report, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) wrote to the following organizations of the United Nations system requesting an update on their activities with SELA: the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Labour Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the International Maritime Organization, the International Telecommunication Union, the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Universal Postal Union, the World Bank, the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO), the World Intellectual Property Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations University, the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. Eight of these organizations sent updated information on their cooperation with SELA. Ten others noted that they were not, at the time, conducting joint activities with SELA. The following summary is based on the information submitted.

II. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

3. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session (A/56/171), since the establishment of SELA in October 1975, considerable cooperation has taken place between United Nations organizations, agencies and programmes and SELA.

4. Such cooperation has evolved over the years and has become more diversified in terms of both the areas of cooperation and the organizations concerned.

5. During the reporting period the cooperation between ECLAC and SELA has consisted mainly of information exchanges and the participation of representatives of ECLAC and SELA in meetings of the two institutions.

6. In follow-up to the execution in 1999 of a joint ECLAC/SELA project aimed at training national focal points for technical cooperation among developing countries on the use of information and communication technologies, SELA has expressed interest in continuing with this line of work at the subregional level. ECLAC would be ready to provide technical support to SELA in this matter.

7. ECLAC participated in the XV Meeting of Directors of International Technical Cooperation, organized by SELA and held in Montevideo from 11 to 13 March 2002. Similarly, SELA attended the twenty-ninth session of ECLAC, held in Brasilia from 6 to 10 May 2002. In addition, ECLAC will give a presentation at the International Seminar on Migration, in Caracas on 1 and 2 August 2002 organized by SELA and UNESCO.

8. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) attaches great importance to cooperation with SELA. At present OHCHR is in the process of implementing a regional strategy for the Latin American and Caribbean region in which SELA features as a relevant partner.

9. As part of this strategy, and pursuant to an ECLAC/OHCHR memorandum of understanding signed in December 2000, OHCHR appointed a

Regional Representative in November 2001. Posted in the recently established Human Rights Unit of the ECLAC Social Development Division, the Regional Representative is responsible, inter alia, for enhancing cooperation with regional institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean. The collaboration between OHCHR and SELA will be carried out in coordination with ECLAC and will focus on economic, social and cultural rights. The OHCHR Regional Representative has already held initial discussions with representatives of the SELA secretariat.

10. Over the years FAO has been associated with the work carried out by the Action Committees established under the umbrella of SELA, such as the Action Committee on Marine and Freshwater Products, the Action Committee on Fertilizers, the Action Committee on Regional Food Security, the Action Committee for the Economic and Social Development of Central America and the Action Committee on Latin American Cooperation and Consultation on Plant Genetic Resources.

11. Although SELA and FAO did not implement specific cooperation activities during the period under review, they have maintained reciprocal attendance at meetings. FAO attended the XV Meeting of Directors of International Technical Cooperation.

12. The collaboration between UNESCO and SELA takes place through the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC). Within the framework of the Institute's programme of work, and with the aim of creating new opportunities for dialogue and joint reflection among the main entities working on higher education in the region, in February 2002 SELA and IESALC signed a cooperation agreement for the organization of two seminars.

13. Pursuant to this agreement, UNESCO will provide a financial contribution and technical assistance to SELA for the aforementioned activities, the first of which will focus on international migration, particularly outflows of young professionals, and will take place in Caracas on 1 and 2 August 2002. The second seminar will be held in Caracas on 12 and 13 September and will focus on higher education and regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

14. In addition, UNESCO continues to support the monthly publication by SELA of the *Bulletin on Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean* and the biannual publication of the *Guide to Integration*.

15. During the period under review, the World Bank and SELA continued to collaborate in many substantive areas. In particular, officials from the World Bank attended meetings organized by SELA and vice versa. They also worked closely together in the production of papers and research materials on recent economic developments in the region.

16. Since 2001 WHO/PAHO has strengthened its permanent observer role in SELA, with the twofold purpose of monitoring the health implications of trade and integration agreements and advocating the inclusion of health priorities in negotiation agendas.

17. Within this framework, WHO/PAHO sponsored the participation of officials in charge of international technical cooperation within the Ministries of Health in the XV Meeting of Directors of International Technical Cooperation. Previously this annual meeting had usually been attended by national delegations consisting only of representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The participants in the meeting adopted a declaration requesting WHO/PAHO support for strengthening the capacities of the human resources in charge of international technical cooperation within the Ministries of Health and, in coordination with SELA and other cooperation organizations, for mobilizing the necessary international resources in order to accomplish that goal.

18. In addition, PAHO is currently considering expanding its collaboration with SELA in activities such as the design of subregional training workshops on international technical cooperation, particularly in order to foster coordination between staff in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Ministries of Health; co-sponsorship of the *Bulletin on Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean*, produced by SELA, with the aim of increasing the coverage of health issues related to Latin American and Caribbean integration processes; and participation in a multi-agency effort to carry out a baseline study on social aspects of integration processes in the Americas.

19. SELA has also expressed interest in working jointly with WHO/PAHO in areas such as poverty, microenterprises and economic and social policies. WHO/PAHO is interested in working on these issues,

as this work may serve to further the understanding of the interrelationship between health and development.

20. The UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (SU/TCDC) has contributed in recent years to the annual SELA Meeting of Directors of International Technical Cooperation. This support has facilitated the participation of SELA members in the discussion of major policy issues and priorities in the area of technical cooperation among developing countries. At the XV Meeting, the representative of SU/TCDC made a presentation entitled "Widening South-South bridges across and beyond Latin America and the Caribbean in the twenty-first century".

21. During that Meeting, both institutions explored opportunities for possible further cooperation, especially regarding the dissemination of best practices in the various areas of development in the region for the purpose of expanding South-South cooperation within and beyond the region.

22. The UNCTAD secretariat collaborates with SELA in identifying and analysing the development implications of issues related to international trade and investment agreements. In the area of trade, the UNCTAD secretariat participated in a conference debate, hosted by SELA in Caracas on 30 May 2002, on the state of play and prospects of the Doha multilateral trade negotiations. At the meeting, attended by trade officials, experts and private-sector representatives, UNCTAD made a presentation on agricultural issues. Future joint SELA/UNCTAD activities in this field could focus, in particular, on the links between the ongoing hemispheric and multilateral trade negotiations from the point of view of the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

23. In the area of investment, UNCTAD has, upon request, provided assistance to States members of SELA by proposing investment policy reviews that critically examine investment policies and their relevance and effectiveness in terms of attracting foreign direct investment, ensuring that economic benefits are maximized and providing technical assistance for the implementation of national investment promotion strategies. UNCTAD has worked with the General Secretariat of the Andean Community in designing a subregional investment promotion strategy, and its post-Doha mandate on trade and investment implies further research and capacity-building in this area, which should lead to increased cooperation with SELA.

24. Since 2001, the Americas and Caribbean Regional Office of UNICEF has held permanent informal consultations with SELA on economic issues, especially in relation to the current financial crisis in the region. UNICEF participated in the twenty-seventh meeting of the SELA Latin American Council, held in Caracas in October 2001. In turn, SELA participated in a UNICEF Regional Office management team meeting, held in November 2001, to provide an overview of the economic and political situation in the region and its possible social impacts. UNICEF participated in the XV Meeting of Directors of International Technical Cooperation, giving a presentation on international goals for social development and development cooperation.

25. Currently, UNICEF, with the support of SELA and ECLAC, and in cooperation with other partners, is initiating activities to develop a child risk index for countries of the region, as a contribution to the follow-up of the General Assembly's special session on children, held in May 2002, and as a response to the social consequences of the financial crisis in the region.